

1991

# Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Student Writing

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE  
BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Robert L. Carothers

FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Report of the Curricular Affairs  
Committee Subcommittee on Student Writing, is forwarded for your  
consideration.
2. The original and two copies for your use are included.
3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on September 26, 1991.  
(date)
4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval  
or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of  
Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
5. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws,  
this bill will become effective October 17, 1991,  
three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for  
implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved;  
(3) you forward it to the Board of Governors for their approval; or (4)  
the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is  
forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until  
approved by the Board.

September 27, 1991  
(date)

Leonard M. Kahn

Leonard M. Kahn  
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

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ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

Returned.

a. Approved ✓.

b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors \_\_\_\_.

c. Disapproved \_\_\_\_.

October 10, 1991  
(date)

Robert L. Carothers  
President

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE

On September 26, 1991, the Faculty Senate approved the following recommendations of the CAC Subcommittee on Student Writing:

1. **Recommendation Concerning the Faculty Institute on Writing:**  
A faculty development project is an important first step towards a successful writing across the curriculum program. At URI such a project, called a Faculty Institute on Writing, would promote informed interest about writing among faculty, students and administrators. The Institute would hold faculty workshops on writing and the teaching of writing, and would work with faculty and departments to design writing intensive courses. The Institute, with appropriate personnel and support services, should be part of the College Writing Program. Therefore, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should proceed with plans for such an institute, as appropriate with UNIVERSITY MANUAL regulations. It should do so in consultation with Director of the College Writing Program (who, by Faculty Senate legislation, is a member of the Subcommittee), with the Instructional Development Program, with the Provost, with the Chair of the Faculty Senate, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences and with the College Writing Program faculty.
2. **Recommendation concerning writing intensive courses:** There are a number of courses across campus that are already writing intensive or could become writing intensive; faculty and departments should work with the Faculty Institute on Writing to develop and support such courses. Two years after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should report to the Faculty Senate about the progress of the Faculty Institute and the development of writing intensive courses, and make a recommendation as to the feasibility of a writing intensive course requirement.
3. **Recommendation concerning writing intensive course approval:** The Subcommittee on Student Writing should consider a writing intensive course labeling or approval process and a format for expediting approval. A report and recommendation on the approval process should be brought to the Faculty Senate one year after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing.

4. **Recommendation concerning program evaluation:** As part of its mission, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should develop an appropriate evaluation plan for writing across the curriculum at URI. The Subcommittee on Student Writing should report yearly to the Faculty Senate about the efforts and achievements of the Faculty Institute on Writing and the welfare of writing intensive courses, and the Subcommittee on Student Writing should assess the impact of writing across the curriculum upon student writing achievement.



THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STUDENT WRITING TO THE FACULTY SENATE

I. Charge to the Subcommittee.....	44
II. Executive Summary.....	44
III. Background.....	45
III. A. The First Report on Student Writing.....	45
III. B. The Second Report on Student Writing.....	46
IV. Proposed Elements of a Writing Across the Curriculum Program at URI.....	48
IV. A. Benefits of Frequent Writing and of Writing Instruction in Courses Across the Curriculum.....	48
IV. B. Faculty Development.....	49
IV. C. Courses.....	53
IV. D. Writing Intensive Course Labels and Approval.....	57
IV. E. Program Evaluation.....	58
V. Recommendations.....	58
VI. Appendices.....	60
VI. A. Appendix I - Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Development at Three Other Universities.....	60
VI. B. Appendix II - Two Other "Homes" for the Faculty Institute on Writing.....	61
VI. C. Appendix III - Writing Intensive Courses at a Variety of Institutions.....	62
VI. D. Appendix IV - Writing Intensive Course Approval at Two Other Universities.....	64

I. Charge to the Subcommittee

**I. A. Charge:** On March 23, 1988, the Faculty Senate created the Curricular Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Student Writing and charged it to report to the Faculty Senate about:

1. the number and type of "writing intensive" courses already in place and should make a recommendation about "writing intensive" course credits to be required for graduation;
2. a proposal for a Faculty Institute on Writing, including recommendations on curriculum matters and the administrative structure of the Institute.

The Subcommittee has executed its charge and herewith reports its findings to the Faculty Senate and makes recommendations based on these findings.

II. Executive Summary

**II. A. Background:** The Subcommittee proceeded in accordance with two earlier reports to the Faculty Senate. The first report called for a writing across the curriculum program as a means of improving student writing, such a program to include writing intensive courses and a Faculty Institute on Writing. The second report found a variety of courses across the curriculum which appear to be writing intensive and which could be part of a writing across the curriculum program.

**II. B. Proposed Elements of a Writing Across the Curriculum Program at URI:** The Subcommittee reviewed the important elements of a writing across the curriculum program.

**II. B. 1. Faculty Institute on Writing to Support Faculty Development:** The Subcommittee found that a faculty development project is an important element of writing across the curriculum programs across the country, because it brings faculty into the program, insures that the program remains vigorous, and is often a source of research and grant writing. The Subcommittee sees the Faculty Institute on Writing as the first step and long-term focal point for a successful writing across the curriculum, because the Institute will promote informed interest and practice in writing and in the teaching of writing among faculty, students and administrators. The Subcommittee suggests that, with adequate support, the Faculty Institute on Writing should be housed in the College Writing Program.

**II. B. 2. Writing Intensive Courses:** The Subcommittee reviewed and accepted the 1989 report to the Faculty Senate which found that there are many courses across the curriculum which are writing intensive or could be enhanced so as to be writing intensive, because they already offer extensive writing activities and assignments. The Subcommittee found that appropriate class size and the encouragement of faculty are two key factors which aid the development of writing intensive

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@ Proposed legislation increases Faculty Senate appointees from 3 to 7

courses. While the Subcommittee urges the development of writing intensive courses, it wants to monitor the success of the Faculty Institute on Writing and of writing intensive courses before making a recommendation on course requirements.

**II. B. 3. Course Approval:** The Subcommittee discussed that if students are to be aware of and encouraged to take writing intensive courses, these courses should be labelled and approved in a systematic and efficient fashion. The Subcommittee considered whether course approval belonged within departments or should follow the existing new-course approval route. The Subcommittee decided to continue to consider the problem of labeling and approval of writing intensive courses.

**II. B. 4. Program Evaluation:** The Subcommittee decided that a writing across the curriculum program which includes a Faculty Institute on Writing, writing intensive courses and a course approval process is a significant undertaking for the University, and that an appropriate evaluation plan should be put in place by the Subcommittee and that yearly reports should be made to the Faculty Senate.

**II. C. Recommendations:** The Subcommittee proposes:

- a recommendation supporting the establishment of a Faculty Institute on Writing;
- a recommendation supporting the development of writing intensive courses;
- a recommendation supporting the development of writing intensive course approval;
- a recommendation supporting the development of a program evaluation plan.

### III. Background

**III A. The First Report on Student Writing:** The Subcommittee fulfilled its charge by remaining within the findings, recommendations and definitions of the Ad Hoc Committee Report on Student Writing to the Faculty Senate of March 23, 1988.

**III. A. 1. Ad Hoc Committee's findings:** The Ad Hoc Committee came to three conclusions about student writing at URI:

- a problem with the quality of student writing exists at URI;
- the problem is not one of remediation but of improving a low skills level and of maintaining improvement;
- students must write throughout their years at school if their writing abilities are to reach satisfactory levels, and good writing must be demanded and valued by faculty if it is to be produced regularly by students.

**III. A. 2. Ad Hoc Committee suggestions:** The Ad Hoc Committee made a number of suggestions concerning the improvement of student writing.

- To improve their writing proficiency, students should write more during all of their years at URI in courses all across the campus.
- Additional credit hours should not be added to degree requirements.
- Writing Across the Curriculum, an approach used at many other institutions, would be a useful way to address the writing problem at URI, because writing across the curriculum encourages subject area courses to become "writing intensive" courses. Writing intensive courses call for frequent and extensive writing, multiple submissions, opportunities to revise writing, and offer help and advice about writing from instructors.
- A Faculty Institute on Writing is needed as a resource for faculty and for writing intensive classes.

**III. B. The Second Report on Student Writing:** During academic year 1989-90 the Subcommittee on Student Writing surveyed the 52 departments with undergraduate courses to ascertain the kind and number courses already in place that required writing. The results of this survey were reported to the Faculty Senate on February 22, 1990. These are the results of the survey and the conclusions drawn by the Subcommittee.

**III. B. 1. Courses that require writing:** The Subcommittee found most departments have courses that require some writing beyond the essay exam.

1. a) 43 departments listed courses or faculty that require writing.

1. b) 6 departments responded - no courses or faculty. (Math; Microbiology; Biochemistry; Elect. Engr.; Medicinal Chem; Accounting).

1. c) 2 departments listed a large category of courses as requiring writing (Marine Affairs & Phys. Ed.).

1. d) 6 departments listed "all courses" as requiring writing. (History; English; Dental Hygiene; Philosophy; Human Development, Counseling and Family Studies; Political Science.)

1. e) 215 individual courses listed as requiring writing (not including departments responding "all").

1. f) 202 faculty responded as concerned about or requiring writing in their classes.

1. g) Departments: art; chemistry; computer science; dental hygiene; English; marine affairs; geology; history; journalism; military science; music; philosophy; political science; psychology; physics; sociology & anthropology; speech; theater; finance & insurance; management; marketing; management sci.; chemical engineering; civil engineering; industrial manufacturing engineering; mechanical engineering; human development, counseling & family studies; textiles, fashion merchandising & design; education; phys. ed.; communicative disorders; fisheries, animal & veterinary science; mechanical engineering; plant science; resource economics; nursing; consumer affairs; botany-zoology; natural resources sci.; pharmacology; food science.

III. B. 2. Writing intensive courses: The subcommittee found that many faculty are teaching "Writing Intensive" courses, or courses that call for frequent and extensive writing, multiple submissions, opportunities to revise writing, and offer help and advice about writing from instructors.

2. a) 55 courses from 13 departments taught by 25 faculty require writing that includes supervised revision &/or multiple submission of drafts. Levels of courses are from 200 through to 500 (mostly 300 & 400).

2. b) Departments: anthropology-sociology; botany; fisheries; animal science; geology; history; human development, counseling & family studies; journalism; speech; textiles; zoology; English; nursing; civil engineering.

III. B. 3. Conclusions from the Second Report on Student Writing: The Subcommittee drew several conclusions from these findings that are encouraging to writing across the curriculum.

3. a) There are in place a large number of courses that are enriched with opportunities for writing beyond the essay exam. These could be readily identified for students.

3. b) Several faculty are teaching "writing intensive" courses; these courses tend to be at the upper class level. These courses could be readily identified for students and serve as a beginning or a model for writing intensive courses in all subject areas.

3. c) To extend the presence of writing intensive courses on campus a Faculty Institute on Writing will be needed as a resource for faculty as they develop and maintain writing intensive courses.

#### IV. Proposed Elements of a Writing Across the Curriculum Program at URI

A. Benefits of Frequent Writing and of Writing Instruction in Courses Across the Curriculum;

B. Faculty Institute to Support Faculty Development;

C. Writing Intensive Courses;

D. Course Approval;

E. Program Evaluation.

IV. A. Benefits of Frequent Writing and of Writing Instruction in Courses Across the Curriculum: The March 1988 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Writing concluded that any solution to the problem of writing proficiency would require that students write more during all of their years at URI in courses all across the campus. Further research by the Subcommittee on Student Writing confirms that at many institutions with established writing across the curriculum programs where a wide variety of courses across the curriculum require frequent writing and offer writing instruction, there are important benefits for students:

- students have the opportunity to use writing as a means of exploring and learning course material;
- students have the opportunity to express major ideas, practice vocabulary and employ cognitive techniques important to a subject area;
- students have the opportunity to practice writing, to improve their skills level and to maintain their improved levels;
- students have the opportunity to master the written forms typical of academic subject areas and professions;
- students have the opportunity to receive guided practice in disciplinary discourse.

Therefore, the Subcommittee on Student Writing urges that URI move toward writing across the curriculum by establishing important elements of such a program in the following sequence.

1. Faculty Institute on Writing to Support Faculty Development;
2. Writing Intensive Courses;
3. Course Approval;
4. Program Evaluation.

**IV. B. Faculty Development:** The March 1988 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Writing said that many institutions with writing across the curriculum programs also have a faculty development project as a strong and recommended component for program success, because a faculty development project:

- helps faculty focus on the nature of writing in their disciplines;
- provides opportunities for faculty to share techniques that help students write better;
- promotes the development of writing intensive courses across the curriculum;
- creates an environment that supports University-wide interest in writing;
- conducts research on writing at the University;
- seeks grants to support faculty development activities.

In response to the March 1989 report of the Subcommittee on Student Writing, the Faculty Senate asked the Subcommittee on Student Writing to investigate and report on a Faculty Institute to support writing across the curriculum. The Subcommittee on Student Writing investigated successful faculty development projects at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Vermont, and the State Universities of Minnesota. Major points of comparison and contrast are presented below; details appear in Appendix I.

This report will then present an initial model for a Faculty Institute on Writing at URI.

**IV. B. 1. Major points concerning faculty development projects at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Vermont, and the State Universities of Minnesota:** The projects offer major points of comparison and differences in terms of their outcomes, stated goals, organization, and sources of support.

**1. a) Outcomes:** At the three institutions the faculty development projects that support writing across the curriculum offer summer and between-semester workshops to faculty about writing and teaching of writing. In addition, there are follow-up workshops throughout the semester. In all three instances the leadership faculty associated with the workshops are English department faculty. In all three cases the workshops are credited with increased writing assignments and activities within classes and with improving faculty perception about the role of writing in learning and effective communication. At all three institutions, the outcomes of writing across the curriculum are important enough that the projects continue even in difficult financial times.

**1. b) Stated Goals:** The particular goals of each project vary. At the University of Massachusetts the goal is to help in the design, designation and teaching of specific writing intensive courses. At the University of Vermont the goal is to promote writing-to-learn techniques in all classes. At the State Universities of Minnesota the goals are to aid in general faculty development and promote a community of faculty interested in writing.

**1. c) Organization:** Within each institution the 'homes' of the projects also vary. At the University of Massachusetts the project is part of the effort of a cross-disciplinary, faculty senate committee which has other writing across the curriculum tasks to direct and maintain. At the University of Vermont the project is the primary effort of writing across the curriculum leadership faculty who are working from a base in the English Department. At the State Universities of Minnesota the faculty writing project is part of an established faculty development project and part of state-wide writing assessment, kindergarten through graduate school.

**1. d) Sources of Support:** The sources of support, particularly financial and personnel support, vary. Funding and support services (such as secretary, mailing, etc.) at the University of Massachusetts come from an established Writing Program budget. At the University of Vermont there is a patchwork of administrative funding. At the State Universities of Minnesota the funding is through the state-wide system and private donations. On the other hand, in all cases, leadership faculty came from the English department who usually receive released-time from their home department. Also, faculty who attend workshops receive some form of financial or other support (i.e. money, meals, released time etc.), ranging from minimal to generous.

**IV. B. 2. A Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Development Project at URI--The Faculty Institute on Writing:** The 1986 and the 1989 reports to the Faculty Senate on writing across the curriculum have supported establishing a Faculty Institute on Writing as the appropriate place for a faculty development project at URI. In addition, the Subcommittee on Student Writing believes that a Faculty Institute on Writing which is well-informed about the successes and failures at other institutions is an excellent first step towards our writing across the curriculum program, because it can be the primary means for promoting informed interest in writing across campus. At URI, however, the goals, organization and sources of support should be designed to draw on the strengths of our institution.

**2. a) Goals of a Faculty Institute on Writing at URI:** The Faculty Institute is to be a first step towards a writing across the curriculum program at URI, because the Institute will:



- promote informed interest about writing among faculty, students and administrators;
- help all members of the University community become knowledgeable about how writing promotes learning;
- help faculty share and expand their knowledge of writing in their disciplines;
- help faculty learn about effective teaching of writing so that students have much more guided writing practice.

The Faculty Institute on Writing could:

- help students participate in setting university goals for writing improvement and help them rethink their attitudes about the role of writing in their careers and life endeavors;
- help administrators explore the variety of ways writing and improved teaching of writing can be supported throughout and beyond the University.

The Institute should perform a variety of specific activities. It should:

- hold faculty workshops on writing and the teaching of writing;
- aid faculty and departments with the design of writing intensive courses;
- conduct research on writing across the curriculum at URI;
- seek funds for development of writing across the curriculum.

In addition, it might:

- conduct one-day campus-wide conventions on writing at URI for students, administrators and faculty;
- support a campus newsletter on writing across the curriculum and join computer bulletin boards across and between campuses
- design other activities that promote awareness of the importance of writing to an academic community.

**2. b) Organization:** Where in the institution should the Faculty Institute on Writing fit? The Subcommittee on Student Writing explored three possibilities: as a function of the Subcommittee on Student Writing, within the

Instructional Development Program and within the College Writing Program. After much consideration among subcommittee members, and after discussion with Bette Le Sere Erickson of the Instructional Development Program and with Linda Shamoon of the College Writing Program, the Subcommittee on Student Writing decided upon the College Writing Program as the appropriate home for the Faculty Institute on Writing. Discussion of the two other options (as a function of the Subcommittee on Student Writing or within the Instructional Development Program) appears in Appendix II.

The College Writing Program (CWP) is housed in the English Department and has five faculty who are expert in the teaching of writing at all levels of university study. The CWP operates a computerized Writing Center with its own Director that guides over 1,000 students per semester in all kinds of writing projects for classes across the curriculum. In addition, the CWP has several courses in place (Wrt 201, Wrt 227 and Wrt 333) which address several forms of writing in various disciplines, including critical reviews, research papers in several disciplines, laboratory reports, case studies, project proposals and advanced science writing; therefore, the faculty is knowledgeable about many aspects of writing across the curriculum. Finally, a new faculty member is joining the CWP who has expertise in discourse theory, the area of research and teaching which has led to the current writing across the curriculum movement across the country.

Housing a faculty development project in the CWP has the advantage of administration by a faculty of writing experts who know the field and who have already consulted with faculty across campus on various aspects of writing in their classes. In addition, the Writing Center already provides tutoring support for classes and is a natural location for a materials and other support services for writing across the curriculum. Also, the CWP faculty is dedicated to research in writing and to outreach to the state's high schools, two efforts that are associated with particularly successful writing across the curriculum programs, such as those at University of Michigan and the State Universities of Minnesota.

Finally, if the CWP houses the faculty development project, it will need adequate personnel and support services.

**2 c) Sources of support:** The primary types of institutional support required for the Faculty Institute are expert leadership, financial support for workshops and other activities, and staff services. As is typical at other institutions, leadership personnel could come from the

College Writing Program, with a faculty member serving as director. Funding for workshops, conventions, a newsletter, and faculty stipends could be a secured part of the University budget from the Provost's Office. Support services could be part of the CWP budget.

**IV. B. 3. Recommendation:** A faculty development project is an important first step towards a successful writing across the curriculum program. At URI such a project, called a Faculty Institute on Writing, would promote informed interest about writing among faculty, students and administrators. The Institute would hold faculty workshops on writing and the teaching of writing, and would work with faculty and departments to design writing intensive courses. The Institute, with appropriate personnel and support services, should be part of the College Writing Program. Therefore, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should proceed with plans for such an institute, as appropriate with UNIVERSITY MANUAL regulations. It will do so in consultation with Director of the College Writing Program (who, by Faculty Senate legislation, is a member of the Subcommittee), with the Instructional Development Program, with the Provost, with the Chair of the Faculty Senate, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences and with the College Writing Program faculty.

**IV. C. Courses:** The 1986 report to the Faculty Senate said that writing intensive courses are an important part of a writing across the curriculum program because they give students opportunities to improve and practice their writing under the guidance of faculty who are experts in their disciplines.

The 1989 report to the Faculty Senate found that there are two types of courses across campus that support the beginnings of a writing across the curriculum program. First, there are some courses that are already writing intensive, because they offer substantive instruction in writing from faculty and they include a variety of writing activities. Second, there are many courses that could be enhanced as writing intensive, because they already offer some writing activities and assignments; faculty and departments offering these courses could work with the Faculty Institute on Writing to make these courses writing intensive. Further, there are courses in place at other institutions which can serve as models for interesting and effective writing intensive courses that could be developed at URI; these are described in Appendix III.

**IV. C. 1. Definition of Writing Intensive Courses:** In general, writing intensive courses call for:

- frequent writing other than essay exams;
- help and advice about writing to be given by the instructor.

Typically, the courses include:

- multiple submissions of drafts;

- opportunities to revise writing;
- a variety of academic writing assignments, such as journals, responses to readings, book reports, and term papers;
- a variety of professional writing assignments, such as patient charts or client reports, case studies; laboratory reports; reviews of research; critical essays; longer term papers; project proposals.

The aim of these assignments is to prepare and offer practice in advanced or professional types of written expression or discourse. In evaluating these assignments, the quality of the writing is an important part of the grade, and a percentage of the final grade is based upon these assignments. Many of these courses are at the 300-500 level.

**IV. C. 2. Examples of Writing Intensive Courses at URI:** There are many courses already in place at URI that are writing intensive. Here are a few examples of courses at URI that appear to be writing intensive:

2. a) History - 351, 352, 395 (and other history courses) - These courses call for a variety of short papers, term papers with partial draft submissions, and in some sections book reviews are also required. Supervised revision is part of the course and multiple re-submission of drafts is required in many sections.
2. b) FST 321, 421, 521, 510 - These courses call for three term papers and in FST 510 four to five laboratory reports are required; all assignments include supervised revision and multiple re-submission of drafts.
- 2 c) Nursing 320, 325 - These courses call for extensive practice in academic and professional writing with re-submission of extensive outlines. The writing includes journal entries and progress reports in patient charts.
2. d) Zoology 466 - Term paper writing with supervised revision that occurs throughout the semester.

**IV. C. 3. Courses at URI that could become writing intensive:** In almost all departments on campus, there are courses that ask students to write beyond the essay exam. In general, the aim of these assignments is to improve exploration and mastery of the course materials and offer a means of self expression. Even though these courses offer writing opportunities, there may be no opportunities to discuss writing, to receive instruction in good writing or to receive guidance in revision and improvement. Nevertheless these opportunities may be introduced into these courses in a variety of ways, so that the courses could become truly writing intensive.

There are many courses that could be enhanced as writing intensive. For example:

3 a) Physics 381, 382 - This course now requires 6 to 8 laboratory reports. The instructor distributes questions about laboratory report thinking and writing that help students understand report writing. The instructor refers those students who need writing help to the Writing Center; the Writing Center tutor is introduced to the class and the available hours of writing tutoring at the Center for the physics class are posted. Possibilities for enhancement: If all students were required to draft and revise their weakest report based on advice from the instructor, then attention to the writing comes from the physics professor and the quality of writing is seen as an important part of the evaluation of laboratory reports.

3 b) Education 250 - The primary writing in this class is of weekly field reports, two to three pages each, constituting 50% of final grade. Possibilities for enhancement: If the models of well-written field reports are distributed and explained regularly by the instructor, if the process of writing a field report is demonstrated by the instructor and/or if the field report is tied to the nature of knowledge in the discipline, then the writing assignments and learning in the course are joined as equally important.

3 c) Human Development, Counseling and Family Studies 203 - In this class a variety of writing is required, including a case study, a response to reading, and journal entries; writing assignments count for 30% of final grade. Possibilities for enhancement: if one of these exploratory modes of writing are further developed with advice from the instructor and revised into writing that has a finished format, such as a term paper or research report, then a sustained and varied writing experience is offered to the students, and the course materials are learned in more depth through written expression.

3 d) A variety of courses in all disciplines that require term papers: Possibilities for enhancement: Break the term paper assignment into a variety of writing assignments spread throughout the semester, such as a reading journal, note cards, early drafts, late drafts, etc. The instructor might distribute and explain good models of the various kinds of writing, demonstrate how journal entries, notes and drafts are revised, and offer comments on drafts and in conferences that lead to final drafts.

**IV. C. 4. Factors which aid the development of writing intensive courses:** There are many courses on campus which require writing beyond the essay exam (most typically requiring term papers) but will be difficult to convert to writing intensive unless two important factors are addressed: class size and encouragement of faculty.

4. a) Class size: A writing intensive course necessitates that students receive substantive help with their writing through a variety of assignments. This kind of help is best given in small classes, because of the time and energy required of the instructor. Writing Intensive classes must have a reasonable limit set on class size.

4. b) Encouragement of faculty: Faculty who attend the Faculty Institute or who develop writing intensive classes will be rethinking their teaching styles, redesigning their syllabuses, taking more time with students, and--inevitably if temporarily--taking time away from other activities, such as research or service. If these faculty are to succeed and if new faculty are to be enticed to try writing intensive classes, then administrators and colleagues must be supportive in a variety of ways, especially during peer reviews and annual reviews.

4. c) Course requirements: The Subcommittee on Student Writing has discussed at length whether or not writing intensive course requirements will aid in the development of a successful writing across the curriculum program. On the one hand, if the Faculty Institute is successful, the faculty will infuse many kinds of courses with writing and there will be many writing intensive courses in place; students would find themselves writing in most courses without the imposition of another requirement. On the other hand, the university expresses what is important in the students' educational experience by establishing requirements, thus making sure that its graduates have had a variety of educational opportunities and challenges. In order to make a recommendation on the feasibility of writing intensive course requirements, the Subcommittee on Student Writing needs to observe the success of the Faculty Institute and of writing intensive courses.

**IV. C. 5. Recommendation:** There are a number of courses across campus that are already writing intensive or could become writing intensive; faculty and departments should work with the Faculty Institute on Writing to develop and support such courses. Two years after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing, the Subcommittee on Student Writing will report to the Faculty Senate about the progress of the Faculty Institute and the development of writing intensive courses, and make a recommendation as to the feasibility of a writing intensive course requirement.

**IV. D. Writing Intensive Course Labels and Approval:** If students are to be aware of and encouraged to take writing intensive courses, these courses should be labelled and approved in a systematic and efficient fashion. At other institutions, boards and committees approve and review writing intensive courses for faculty and students; these models appear in Appendix IV.



**IV. D. 1. Identification of writing intensive courses:** If courses are to be required or simply encouraged, they must be identified for students. Therefore, an identification and approval process for writing intensive courses will be necessary. At least two options are available. Course labeling and approval may rest with each individual department; or course labeling may follow the new course approval model in place at URI, requiring department, college and campus-wide committee approval.

1. a) Within departments: If each department is responsible entirely for identifying and approving its own writing intensive courses, the process will be extremely efficient. But this may also result in widely differing courses, with no participation in the larger campus community which is fostering writing in classes and may well result in the eventual demise of individual courses when new faculty teach the courses or the demise of writing across the curriculum as a whole, as has been the experience on other campuses.

1. b) Existing university approval process: The approval route that follows the existing new course proposal model, in which departments propose a course and several campus committees approve the course, is a slower, more bureaucratic model. Courses take a longer time to be approved and the locus of control is shared with groups outside the department. On the other hand, the rationale and course content are reviewed and made clear to a wide audience of colleagues; the review process when successful helps to sharpen and improve the course. With proposed writing intensive courses, the course's place in a writing across the curriculum program could be reviewed and made consistent with that program and with university standards. Furthermore, a whole-campus review process and a department commitment to the university community could help to insure that a course remains writing intensive beyond an individual faculty member's participation.

**IV. D. 2 . An Approval Process at URI:** At URI the Subcommittee on Student Writing seems a suitable body to approve or label writing intensive courses or sections. The Subcommittee on Student Writing is already established and charged with reporting to the Senate on student writing at URI. It has six members from across the curriculum and is a subcommittee to the Curricular Affairs Committee, a campus-wide committee that reviews new course proposals. Therefore in membership and institutional position, the Subcommittee on Student Writing seems a natural group to serve as the review body for writing intensive course labeling.

If the labeling and approval process is to be successful, it should:

- be efficient;
- encourage the development of writing intensive courses;

- not make course approval more involved than it already is.

In addition, discussion and design of an approval process by the Subcommittee on Student Writing can help prevent problems related to writing intensive courses, such as:

- WI course designations and multiple sections or courses regularly rotated among faculty members: if one faculty member makes a section or offering writing intensive, what is the commitment of other faculty to this course design?;
- WI course designations and course changes: since courses inevitably change over time, how can the writing intensive nature of the course be maintained or renewed?

It is appropriate, therefore, that the Subcommittee on Student Writing continue to consider the problem of labeling and approval of writing intensive courses.

**IV. D. 3. Recommendation:** The Subcommittee on Student Writing should consider a writing intensive course labeling or approval process and a format for expediting approval. A report and recommendation on the approval process should be brought to the Faculty Senate one year after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing.

**IV. E. Program Evaluation:** A writing across the curriculum program that includes a Faculty Institute on Writing, the development of writing intensive courses and a course approval process is a significant undertaking for the University, calling for commitments from administrators, faculty and students. Each of these groups, therefore, deserves to be kept informed about the progress of writing across the curriculum at URI based upon a regular cycle of program evaluation, including a review of the efforts and achievements of the Faculty Institute on Writing, the welfare of writing intensive courses, and an overview of student writing achievement. Therefore:

**Recommendation:** As part of its mission, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should develop an appropriate evaluation plan. The Subcommittee on Student Writing should report yearly to the Faculty Senate about the efforts and achievements of the Faculty Institute on Writing and the welfare of writing intensive courses, and the Subcommittee on Student Writing should assess the impact of writing across the curriculum upon student writing achievement.

#### V. Recommendations

**V. A. Recommendation Concerning the Faculty Institute on Writing:** A faculty development project is an important first step towards a successful writing across the curriculum program. At URI such a project, called a Faculty Institute on Writing, would promote informed interest about writing among faculty, students and administrators. The Institute would hold faculty workshops on writing and the teaching of writing, and would work with faculty and departments to design writing

intensive courses. The Institute, with appropriate personnel and support services, should be part of the College Writing Program. Therefore, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should proceed with plans for such an institute, as appropriate with UNIVERSITY MANUAL regulations. It should do so in consultation with Director of the College Writing Program (who, by Faculty Senate legislation, is a member of the Subcommittee), with the Instructional Development Program, with the Provost, with the Chair of the Faculty Senate, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences and with the College Writing Program faculty.

**V. B. Recommendation concerning writing intensive courses:** There are a number of courses across campus that are already writing intensive or could become writing intensive; faculty and departments should work with the Faculty Institute on Writing to develop and support such courses. Two years after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should report to the Faculty Senate about the progress of the Faculty Institute and the development of writing intensive courses, and make a recommendation as to the feasibility of a writing intensive course requirement.

**V. C. Recommendation concerning writing intensive course approval:** The Subcommittee on Student Writing should consider a writing intensive course labeling or approval process and a format for expediting approval. A report and recommendation on the approval process should be brought to the Faculty Senate one year after the inception of the Faculty Institute on Writing.

**V. D. Recommendation concerning program evaluation:** As part of its mission, the Subcommittee on Student Writing should develop an appropriate evaluation plan for writing across the curriculum at URI. The Subcommittee on Student Writing should report yearly to the Faculty Senate about the efforts and achievements of the Faculty Institute on Writing and the welfare of writing intensive courses, and the Subcommittee on Student Writing should assess the impact of writing across the curriculum upon student writing achievement.

## VI APPENDICES

### VI. A. Appendix I - Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Development at Three Other Universities:

**Three Models of a Faculty Development Project:** The projects at the University of Massachusetts, the University of Vermont, and the State Universities of Minnesota are typically workshop oriented, they promote a variety of goals related to writing across the curriculum, and the projects are maintained and organized in a variety of ways. These variations pose options for faculty development at URI:

**1. University of Massachusetts:** The University Writing Committee, a cross-disciplinary group appointed by the Faculty Senate and charged with the maintenance and review of the Writing Program and of the junior year writing requirement, sponsors regular workshops for faculty involved in the junior year courses that teach writing in the disciplines, and the Committee maintains a library of materials on writing and on the teaching of writing that are used by the entire university faculty. The materials include books on writing, program descriptions and sample syllabuses from courses across the curriculum in the junior year program.

The primary goal of the faculty development effort at the University of Massachusetts is the creation of writing intensive courses in departments across campus which satisfy the junior year writing requirement. As of 1987, 47 out of 65 departments had designed new junior year writing courses, 3 departments require students to take technical or advanced writing in the English Department, several departments had received approval for already existing courses and the remainder had designed supplementary writing seminars for existing courses. The faculty associated with the writing across the curriculum program and its workshops are in the English Department, although evaluation of junior year courses is led by an Associate Director of the Writing Program who is a faculty member from any department on campus and who receives released time from teaching. Funding comes from an established Writing Program budget, part of the Faculty of Humanities and Fine Arts.

**2. University of Vermont:** Two or three times a year the Faculty Writing Project offers to faculty across campus writing workshops which explain and promote the teaching of writing in all disciplines. These workshops cover such topics as the role of writing in learning, making good writing assignments, and evaluating student papers. Throughout the school year, the Project holds follow-up workshops for writing across the curriculum faculty in order to explore new ideas, share successes and solve problems, and to work on manuscripts and conference proposals.

The goal of the Project is to help faculty infuse their on-going courses with more writing, especially writing activities that enhance learning of subject matter. The Project leaders cite the

following outcomes from the workshops: increased student-centered teaching; increased writing-to-learn activities in classes; renewed interest about writing among faculty; more activities in class that help students write better. The workshops have also led to team teaching, collaborative presentations at conferences, and grant proposals. Funding for the workshops is provided by various university divisions, including the Provost's Office and the College of Arts and Sciences. The Project Director and Associate Director are English Department faculty who receive released time to participate in the Project.

**3. The Minnesota Writing Project of the Minnesota State University System:** As part of a system-wide effort to support faculty development, the Minnesota Writing Project holds faculty writing workshops at the end of each summer which include substantial advanced reading and writing assignments, nearly 40 hours of day time sessions and additional writing and revising assignments at night. Participating faculty try out writing assignments, journals writing, content exploration activities, and they evaluate student writing and design writing assignments. The Project holds follow-up workshops throughout the school year.

The aim of the Project is to renew faculty interest in improved teaching and learning, to support faculty as they learn about new techniques of teaching writing and to create a community of faculty interested in writing, both their own and their students'. The Project reports that faculty by the hundreds across the state of Minnesota have added writing to their classes in thoughtful and informed ways, that return-attendance at the workshops keeps faculty interested in keeping writing as a component in their classes and that the workshops prompted many faculty to try new kinds of writing for themselves. The Project is amply supported by a combination of grants from administrators of the State University System and from private foundations. Faculty associated with the Project are typically part of English departments at the various state branches, although on each campus the projects are associated with cross-disciplinary leadership teams.

#### VI. B. Appendix II - Two Other "Homes" for the Faculty Institute on Writing:

**1. The Subcommittee on Student Writing:** At several universities with writing across the curriculum programs, the interdisciplinary board or committee which approves writing across the curriculum courses also runs the faculty development project or institute. This arrangement has the advantage of centralized writing across the curriculum operations and of having every aspect of the writing across the curriculum program (and sometimes the writing program, too) under the direction of faculty from across campus. In such instances, several members of the board receive released time from their own departments to serve as administrators and their efforts are supplemented by other personnel in paid positions.

The disadvantages of such an arrangement concern staffing and finances. The chairs or directors of the board or committee would have to be totally committed to writing across the curriculum along with a career in another academic discipline, and these faculty would, in fact, be starting a new career. Also, the finances of an extended or mature writing across the curriculum program could be quite complex and time-consuming to arrange, because the research and grant seeking activities of other arrangements are not usually part of a committee structure. Finally, such programmatic use of a Faculty Senate committee is not at all in keeping with current tradition at URI, a tradition in which committees serve as oversight or approval bodies but do not maintain programs.

**2. The Instructional Development Program (IDP):** The IDP is an experienced, professional organization which already runs faculty development programs that are successful and well known at URI. The experience, reputation and success of this program make placing writing across the curriculum faculty development under the IDP a particularly appealing option.

The present Directors of the IDP have expressed hesitation in assuming this obligation for several reasons. They do not consider themselves experts in teaching writing or in writing across the curriculum, an area of study, research and administration that has a brief but healthy history. Some English departments and some rhetoric programs train specialists in this area and such expertise often insures a program's success. In addition, a fully functioning faculty development project in writing across the curriculum at some other institutions is often also a research unit and spends some of its energy on attracting grant money. Such efforts are beyond the purview of the IDP. Indeed, the IDP Directors have said they are wary of being asked to do more tasks with the same amount of resources. In fact, if the IDP were to take over the writing across the curriculum faculty development tasks, staffing and finance problems must be solved so as to insure success with this effort.

#### VI. C. Appendix III - Writing Intensive Courses at a Variety of Institutions:

**Writing Intensive Courses at other Schools:** There are a variety of interesting writing across the curriculum courses at other institutions which offer stimulating models for our writing across the curriculum courses:

**1. Geometry & Finite Math, University of Vermont:** Students write in journals for each class meeting. The entries are written in response to homework questions or problems presented in class. The journals are read and graded every three weeks and are used as basis for one-on-one conferences.

2. Zoology, Georgetown University: In this advanced lecture-laboratory course students are expected to conduct carefully controlled experiments and write well written reports. Students work in groups of three to prepare for the laboratory, to conduct the experiment, then to read, draft, revise and proofread all writing, and to communicate throughout the process as a research team, writing and talking with each other in order to "publish" a complete scientific report.

3. Chemical Engineering, Michigan Technological University: In this senior level course in chemical engineering plant design, students write three reports of at least twenty-five pages each; they receive advice about the writing as they draft sections of the reports and they have the chance to revise the reports once after the grades for each are received. Students work in groups of four or five, each taking a role as a member of a hypothetical chemical company, and try to solve a design problem for the plant. They do library research together and discuss design options in order to solve a design problem. They draft the report together and submit it along with an oral presentation.

4. Chemistry, University of Vermont: This is a large lecture course. Students keep a journal in response to homework and lecture content. When they write in the journal, they make a carbon copy to give to the professor. The professor makes transparencies of the journal entries and uses them as content within the lecture to clarify, review or expand course content. Eventually, the students' become responsible for major chunks of course content through their journal responses to readings and homework.

5. Art, University of Chicago: This is a large lecture course that satisfies a core requirement and is taken by at least one-third of the student body. Art graduate students serve as writing interns and they meet with students in small discussion sections to conduct writing exercises. Students keep an "analytic sketchbook," (a variation of a journal), they write postcards describing works of art, and they write objective descriptions of works of art. The interns review drafts of papers with students, and the interns role play with faculty in impromptu oral analyses of works of art so that the students hear the language of art criticism. Many short papers are required.

6. Physics, University of Massachusetts: Writing in Physics is a junior course designed by the Physics Department to satisfy the junior year writing across the curriculum requirement. Students do a series of papers about issues in physics; they do not write laboratory reports. Their paper assignments include explaining to freshman why an airplane flies, writing an article for the New York Times about a difficult concept in physics, writing a proposal to include low-temperature physics as an area of study for seniorphysics majors, and writing a defense of the ethics of the scientific method. Students are expected to submit a draft of each paper for peer review and faculty review, they are expected to write peer reviews and they are expected to revise extensively for the final draft.

#### VI. D. Appendix IV - Writing Intensive Course Approval at Two Other Universities:

**Approval Boards at Other Institutions** - At most institutions where there is a writing across the curriculum program, there is a cross-campus committee or group that approves or promotes or reviews writing intensive classes. Two model committees and processes are at the University of Massachusetts and at the University of Michigan.

1. University of Massachusetts: At the University of Massachusetts the University Writing Committee conducts a biennial program evaluation of all junior year writing programs, primarily to encourage successful programs and to arrange help for faltering programs. The Committee gathers information through written reports and through interviews with faculty and department heads. Each department receives a written report of the Committee's evaluation, and, if necessary, a committee member is assigned to a program to help improve an unsuccessful offering.

2. University of Michigan: At the University of Michigan an English Composition Board, a six-member board, is drawn from the faculty of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts (a college with 13,000 students). The English Composition Board originally designed and now oversees aspects of the writing requirements for the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, including an introductory writing course, writing tutorials or writing workshops for those students deemed in need, and an upper level writing requirement for juniors or seniors. The upper level requirement states that all students take a course, preferably in their area of concentration, that requires extensive writing and focuses student attention on the written expression of knowledge and ideas in a specific discipline. As of 1988 there were at least 70 courses that were approved by the English Composition Board as part of the upper level writing across the curriculum program. The English Composition Board approves new courses for the writing requirement, trains faculty and teaching assistants who teach the courses and sponsors continuing workshops for faculty who teach the courses in order to maintain standards in the writing across the curriculum program. The English Composition Board's activities are funded by the College.